



FEDERAL MINE SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

News Release

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REVIEW COMMISSION DEDICATES HEARING ROOM IN HONOR OF COMMISSIONER RICHARD V. BACKLEY

In a ceremony held April 2, 2004, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission dedicated its hearing room in honor of former Commissioner Richard V. Backley, who served as Commissioner from 1978 until his retirement in 1994. The Review Commission adjudicates cases arising under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, which governs occupational safety and health in the Nation's mines and mills.

Commissioner Backley, who died last October at age 76, was one of the original Commissioners appointed by President Carter in 1978, and by reappointment to successive six-year terms, served through the Reagan, Bush and Clinton Administrations. Backley also served as Chairman of the Commission in the early 1980s and as Acting Chairman on several occasions thereafter.

The memorial plaque designating the Backley Hearing Room describes Backley as "the indispensable Commissioner" whose record-setting length of service "bespoke his genuine respect for his colleagues and the parties and counsel who appeared before him."

Noting that Backley was instrumental in organizing the Commission and establishing its procedures, the dedication goes on to state, "He stood at the forefront in fashioning those landmark cases that guide Commission law and policy to the present day. These accomplishments were owing to his deep regard for the law, his dedication to the goals of the Mine Act, and his contagious optimism."

"Above all," the memorial declares, "Dick's disarming sense of humor was ever the key to his ability to forge consensus and realize the Commission's promise."

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